

GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT WITH GOVERNMENTS

Surveys show a sharp decline in confidence in politicians in the United States, Germany, Japan, Britain, Italy and Sweden, with only The Netherlands showing clear evidence of increasing confidence.

The authors of *In Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?*, Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam, analysed the results of surveys conducted in the rich, industrially developed countries. They found that in 1964, only 29% of people in the United States agreed with the statement, "The government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking after themselves". By 1984, that figure had increased to 55%, and by 1998 to 63%.

This loss of confidence is not limited to politicians. In 11 of 14 countries surveyed, the public had also lost confidence in the parliament, the armed forces, the judiciary, the police and the civil service.

The surveys also noted a decline in political participation, with a fall in the membership of political parties and in the proportion of people who turn out to vote. A University of California study, reported in the *Economist* (17 July 1999), showed that in 18 out of 20 rich countries the pro-



portion of the electorate voting was lower than it was in the early 1950s, with a median decline of 10%. In the US, the trend began to show up in the 1960s and has continued ever since.

Australia is not isolated from these trends. According to the World Values Survey, between 1983 and 1995 the proportion of Australians with a great deal of confidence in the federal government fell from 56% to just 26%. The surveys also found that Australians' trust in key institutions such as the media, the public service, the churches and the legal system had decreased.

Since 1995 the trend has continued, with a *Bulletin* Morgan poll (April 1998) finding that only 7% of Australians believed that politicians were honest and ethical, and that 66% were unhappy with the major parties. A similar poll in 1976 found that 19% believed that politicians were honest and ethical. (Source: By Sue Boland, Green Left Weekly, 26 July 2000, website www.greenleft.org.au)

HARK THE HERALDED "DIGITAL ANGEL" IMPLANT

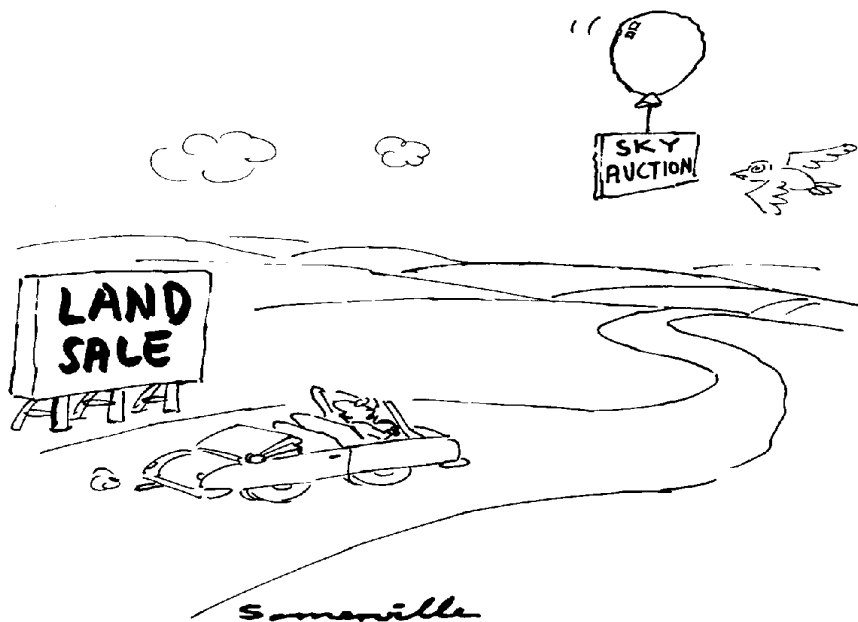
A working prototype of an implant known as "Digital Angel", designed to monitor the physiology and whereabouts of human "wearers", is to be unveiled in October at an invitation-only event in New York City, two months ahead of schedule.

The device, developed by Applied Digital Solutions, Inc. of Palm Beach, Florida, USA, is said to be the first-ever operational combination of bio-sensor technology and Web-enabled wireless telecommunications linked to global positioning satellite location-tracking systems (see Global News, 7/02).

Digital Angel is intended to serve a number of functions. In addition to locating missing persons and monitoring physiological data, the device will be marketed to the world of e-commerce as a means of verifying online consumer identity.

Similar to microchip technologies currently used as electronic ID tags for pets, Digital Angel is a dime-sized implant that is inserted just under the skin. When implanted within a human body, the device is powered electromechanically through the movement of muscles and can be activated either by the "wearer" or by a monitoring facility.

Those attending the event in New York City will see a working, multimedia demonstration of the implant. A miniature sensor device—smaller than a grain of rice and equipped with a tiny antenna—will capture and wirelessly transmit a person's vital body-function data, such as temperature or pulse, to an Internet-integrated ground station. In addition, the antenna will also receive information from the GPS satellite regarding the location of the individual. Both sets of data—medical information and location—will then be wire-



lessly transmitted to the ground station and made available on Web-enabled desktop, laptop or wireless devices.

Research chief Dr Peter Zhou is passionately enthusiastic about the device.

"Digital Angel will be a connection from yourself to the electronic world. It will be your guardian, protector. It will bring good things to you. We will be a hybrid of electronic intelligence and our own soul."

(Sources: ADS press release, 31 July 2000, www.digitalangel.net; WorldNetDaily, 13 August 2000, www.worldnetdaily.com/)

NEW EUROPEAN SECRECY CODE BECOMES LAW

SwEEPING new controls on information, including details of a proposed new European paramilitary police force, have been approved by European Union (EU) governments.

The new EU secrecy code was agreed earlier in August by "written procedure", preventing any debate by the European Parliament. It became part of EU law on 23 August. The code was drawn up in secret by EU security supremo Javier Solana, who is also Secretary-General of the EU Council of Ministers, in cooperation with his successor as NATO Secretary-General, Lord Robertson.

The controls were rushed through despite opposition from the European Ombudsman, Jacob Soderman, who warned that the code could be applied to policy areas presently open to public scrutiny.

Under the Solana plan, all classified documents relating to "security and defence of the Union or one or more of its member states" or to "military or non-military crisis management" will be permanently excluded from public scrutiny.

The blanket secrecy rules will cover proposals to set up a 5,000-strong EU paramilitary police force as well as plans for a rapid reaction force. They could cover all EU discussions on criminal justice, border controls and trade policy.

The code will also enable NATO and non-EU governments to veto the disclosure of EU documents.

However, leaked documents show that the plans go much further than purely military operations. The proposed rapid reaction force could be used to quell "growing violence and destabilising law and order, breaches of the peace, outbreaks of fighting, armed conflicts" and "massive

population movements".

Documents which would have been suppressed under the new controls include minutes of a meeting of paramilitary police from Spain, Portugal, France and Italy in January, at which they discussed the creation of a "European security and investigation force" as a "tool" at the disposal of the EU and NATO.

(Source: By Richard Norton-Taylor, The Guardian, 31 August 2000, [website www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk))

THE SPY IN YOUR POCKET

THE next generation of mobile phones will make it much easier for the police to carry out covert surveillance of citizens, say UK civil liberties campaigners.

They warn that the combination of location-revealing technology built into the phones and rights given to the police under the UK Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIP) Act means that the owners of such phones can and will be watched. They are now advising people that using one of the new phones might make it hard for them to maintain their privacy.

In recognition of the implications, phone companies are working on ways to allow clients to conceal where they are at the touch of a button.

Although existing GSM handsets can be used as location devices, they typically only give a fix to within a couple of hundred metres. This accuracy can be improved if handsets are fitted with special

software that give a fix to within 50 metres of their actual position. Newer mobile phone technologies such as the General Packet Radio Services (GPRS) and Universal Mobile Telecommunications Services (UMTS) have even more accurate locating systems built in. GPRS services are due to become widely available later this year, and UMTS telephone networks are due to be switched on in 2002.

But Caspar Bowden, director of the Foundation for Information Policy Research, warns that the newly passed Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act could allow for the data to be used for a more sinister purpose. He says the RIP Act regards the information used to locate phones as "communications data" and that police do not need a warrant to obtain it. The police could thus use this information to conduct covert surveillance of anyone using such a phone.

(Source: By Mark Ward, BBC News Online, 14 August 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/>)

DOCTORS, THE THIRD LEADING CAUSE OF DEATHS IN THE US

THE US population does not have anywhere near the best health in the world. Of 13 countries in a recent comparison, the United States ranks an average of 12th (second from the bottom) for 16 available health indicators.

Countries in order of their average ranking on the health indicators (with the first



being the best) are: Japan, Sweden, Canada, France, Australia, Spain, Finland, The Netherlands, UK, Denmark, Belgium, USA and Germany.

US estimates of the combined effect of errors and adverse effects that occur because of iatrogenic damage not associated with recognisable error include:

- 12,000 deaths/year from unnecessary surgery;
- 7000 deaths/year from medication errors in hospitals;
- 20,000 deaths/year from other errors in hospitals;
- 80,000 deaths/year from nosocomial infections in hospitals;
- 106,000 deaths/year from non-error, adverse effects of medications.

These total 225,000 deaths per year from iatrogenic causes.

It should be noted that most of the data is derived from studies of hospitalised patients, and that these estimates are for deaths only and do not include adverse effects that are associated with disability or discomfort. If the higher estimates are used, the deaths due to iatrogenic causes would range from 230,000 to 284,000 per year.

In any case, 225,000 deaths per year from iatrogenic causes constitutes the third leading cause of death in the United States,

after deaths from heart disease and cancer. (Source: JAMA 284[4], 26 July 2000, <http://jama.ama-asan.org/issues/>)

CIA OVERSEES "WAR ON AIDS"

On 30 April, the *Washington Post* announced a National Security Agency (NSA) move to place AIDS science, and all public health agencies conducting it, under the command of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Curiously, this move follows South African President Thabo Mbeki's decision to include the testimonies of "dissident" scientists in his country's review of HIV/AIDS treatment practices and the epidemic's origin.

President Clinton, advised by the National Intelligence Council (NIC) to formally declare global AIDS a US "national security threat", signed this policy into law. The action foreshadows the likely persecution, if not incarceration or assassination, of "dissident" AIDS scientists.

The CIA warned in its report to the President and press: "The persistent infectious disease burden is likely to aggravate and, in some cases, may even provoke economic decay, social fragmentation, and political destabilization in the hardest-hit countries..."

The study defined "instability" as revolutionary wars, ethnic wars, genocides and disruptive regime transitions. Dramatic declines in life expectancy, the study said, are the strongest risk factor for "such threats to national security".

Killing two birds with one stone—promoting vaccination and medication—the propagandist report stated that such threats and "deterioration" might be followed by "limited improvement...owing to better prevention and control efforts, new drugs, and vaccines".

Given the potentially grave socio-economic,

political and now military implications of uncovering a vaccine industry-linked cause of AIDS, future publications and open dialogue regarding this hypothesis in the mainstream and scientific media may be increasingly difficult to achieve.

(Source: By Dr Leonard Horowitz, Idaho Observer, USA, July 2000)

BRITISH DRUG-REGULATOR DOCTORS IN SHARES SCAM

Many of the experts who advise the UK government on the safety of medicines have shares in the drug companies which benefit from their decisions.

According to UK media reports, more than two-thirds of the doctors and academics who serve on committees of the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) have investments in the pharmaceutical industry or benefit from drug company cash.

Some doctors have huge shareholdings worth more than £100,000 in major companies such as SmithKline Beecham and AstraZeneca. Many others are dependent on consultancies, fees and research grants from the industry giants.

Nicholas Harvey, the Liberal Democrats' health spokesman, has called for a tightening-up of the regulations governing the advisers' interests and has condemned the secrecy in the committees' meetings, which are all held behind closed doors.

The *Sunday Express* found that more than 170 of the MCA's 248 members have financial links with pharmaceutical companies. A total of 42 own shares in a variety of companies.

(Source: By Jonathan Calvert and Lucy Johnston, *Sunday Express*, London, 6 August 2000, website www.lineone.net/express/)

LIMITED DEBT RELIEF MAY MAKE POOR NATIONS WORSE OFF

International efforts to cut the debts of the world's poorest countries are leaving some of these paying tens of millions of dollars more to their Western creditors, says Oxfam.

The aid agency described the debt relief package which the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are offering Zambia, one of the most impoverished countries in Africa, as a "fraud".

Confidential papers from the IMF, obtained by Oxfam, show that Zambia's interest payments are set to rise from US\$136m (£91m) in 1999 to \$235m in 2002, even though it is expected to enter



"I'll have an entrée of emulsifiers followed by some lightly grilled mercury, with a side order of gently oxidised preservatives and the lady will have anything that's genetically modified."

the West's official debt relief program in October this year. The increase is due to payments falling due on a large IMF loan.

Oxfam has called for the Fund to write-off all the money owed to it by Zambia over the next few years, instead of offering the country limited debt relief.

"The ultimate yardstick for measuring debt sustainability must be human need, rather than abstract financial indicators during creditor horse-trading," said David Bryer, Oxfam's director.

Oxfam's figures show that in six African countries—Mali, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi—debt payments will outstrip spending on basic education even after the countries have graduated from the debt relief program.

(Source: The Guardian, 21 August 2000)

NATO DOES ABOUT-TURN ON KOSOVO DEATH TOLL

Findings by forensic teams from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague have forced NATO to admit that, at most, 3,000 people were killed by Yugoslav forces in Kosovo during the conflict.

Last year, NATO charged that Yugoslav forces had massacred at least 10,000 people. NATO spokespeople implied that as many as 500,000 supposedly "missing" people had also been killed.

NATO has now been forced to admit that in effect it waged a propaganda war to win support for its own illegal intervention that killed over 3,000 Yugoslavs, about one-third of them children.

(Source: Workers World newspaper, 31 August 2000, www.workers.org)

BRITISH AIRCRAFT BOMBED OUT IN KOSOVO CONFLICT

The UK Government stands accused of trying to suppress a report showing that only 3 out of 150 unguided, high-explosive bombs dropped by British aircraft in the Kosovo conflict last year were confirmed as hitting their targets.

The report, produced by the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency of the Ministry of Defence, also showed that only 40% of all bombs dropped by RAF aircraft in the campaign hit their target.

This raises the prospect that civilian casualties and damage to property have been seriously underestimated.

(Source: The Independent, 15 August 2000, www.independent.co.uk/news/World/Europe/2000-08/kosovo150800.shtml)

THE SPY IN YOUR SERVER

Governments all over the world have become embroiled in controversy about electronic surveillance of the Internet. In the USA, a political storm has arisen over a new FBI Internet-tapping system, code-named *Carnivore*. In Britain, the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (RIP) Act now extends telephone-tapping powers to cover Internet service providers (ISPs), and allows the government to arrange indiscriminate tapping or e-mail interception for foreign police forces and security agencies.

Several worldwide factors lie behind the RIP Bill's introduction. The most important of these is to ensure compliance with the conditions of a new American-sponsored international regime of communications interception, whereby law enforcement agencies in one country can quickly arrange for selective monitoring of another country's telecoms traffic in the course of a criminal or intelligence investigation.

Known under the even more unwieldy title of International User Requirements for Lawful Interception of Communications, these came into force secretly within the European Union in 1995. In total, 19 countries—the 15 EU states plus the United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand—have signed the plan. In short, the EU and members of the NSA-led worldwide UKUSA electronic eavesdropping system, of which *Echelon* is an integral part, have all signed up.

In The Netherlands, the Dutch security service BVD admitted in late July that it has been collecting e-mails sent abroad by companies. In The Hague, laws are being prepared to allow the Justice Ministry to tap into e-mail and subscriber records, scan messages and mobile phone calls, and track users' movements. The Australian government has already passed laws allowing security agents to attack and modify computers secretly to obtain information. Many other governments have similar schemes in the pipeline.

These developments are no coincidence, but the direct result of secret planning over seven years by an international co-ordinating group set up by the FBI—after Congress twice refused to extend its telephone-tapping powers for digital networks. Under the innocuous title of the International Law Enforcement Telecommunications Seminar (ILETS), the group has met annually to plan and lobby for telecommunications systems to be made "interception-friendly".

The work of ILETs first came to light in late 1997 when a British researcher, Tony Bunyan, revealed collaboration between EU staff and the FBI over many years. Details of plans to compel ISPs all over the world to install secret Internet interception "black boxes" in their premises appeared in *Online* last year.

In July, the European Parliament appointed 36 MEPs to lead a year-long investigation into *Echelon*—the code-name for a mainly US system for monitoring traffic on commercial communications satellites. *Echelon* has become common parlance for the worldwide electronic eavesdropping or signals intelligence (SIG-INT) network, run by the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) together with the US National Security Agency (NSA). The inquiry will ask if the rights of European citizens are adequately protected and will ascertain whether European industry is being put at risk by the global interception of communications.

Electronic eavesdropping has become a battleground between the US and Russia. The Russian-American Trust and Cooperation Act of 2000, passed on 19 July, stops President Clinton rescheduling or writing-off billions of dollars of Russian debts unless a Russian spy base in Cuba is "permanently closed". This base at Lourdes, located on leased land near Havana, was the former Soviet Union's most important intelligence facility. It uses *Echelon*-type systems to collect data from telephone calls and satellite links covering the US, and allegedly provides "between 60% and 70% of all Russian intelligence data about the US".

The White House wants to stop the campaign to close Lourdes because other countries might then ask the US to close down its identical bases. Documents suggest the US would particularly fear the Lourdes effect spreading to Britain, Germany and Australia, where the NSA operates large sites. Its station at Menwith Hill, Yorkshire, England, is the largest electronic intelligence base in the world.

(Sources: By Duncan Campbell, The Guardian, London, 10 August 2000, www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/online/; Intelligence, France, no. 370, 10 July 2000, www.blythe.org/Intelligence)